



WHY DO WE LIKE ENERGY DRINKS?

Young people like energy drinks for the same reason they like coffee: for their stimulant effect.

But beware! Both energy drinks and coffee contain caffeine. Except that you'll feel the impact of the caffeine in an energy drink much more quickly than the caffeine in coffee.

Why? Because energy drinks are packed for quick consumption: you drink them cold and down them in a few swallows, whereas coffee is usually served hot and sipped more slowly.

And watch out! Not all energy drinks have the same amount of caffeine. Some brands contain as much as **500 mg**, or the equivalent of 6 cups of coffee! All by themselves, without alcohol, such drinks can be dangerous because they increase the risk of caffeine poisoning, which is all the more likely in young people, whose bodies are less used to caffeine and less tolerant of its effects.

WHAT ABOUT THE BULL THING? IS IT TRUE?

Of course not! It's just an urban legend. Energy drinks do not contain bull sperm or bull urine.

On the other hand, energy drinks do contain taurine and glucuronolactone.

Taurine! Wow! What is that, exactly?

Simply put, it's an amino acid found in ox bile (there's that bull again) and now being manufactured synthetically.

Despite its fancy name, glucuronolactone is just an ordinary chemical compound produced naturally in the human liver when glucose is metabolized. It is thought to help combat fatigue.

WARNING!

You should be extremely careful when purchasing energy drinks, because some are already premixed with alcohol. That means you may inadvertently end up mixing alcohol with your energy drink, even if you had no intention of doing so. Also, some companies that produce this new kind of alcoholic beverage are packaging them to look like the non-alcoholic versions. This can be confusing and mislead you, your parents, and even the employees in the stores where both types of energy drinks are sold.

EVERYONE DRINKS THEM!

Easy now, maybe not everyone. But a good third (34%) of people 18-34 drink energy drinks regularly. They say it gives them a boost and helps them stay awake. People drink them here, there and everywhere, often at parties and raves, in bars and at clubs. And when people go to a club to dance and party, they don't want to stay for half an hour, they want to keep going all night. Energy drinks help them achieve that goal.

Adding alcohol to an energy drink

Apparently, it's not all that unusual for people to add alcohol to their energy drinks. According to one Italian study, nearly half (48.5%) of those who drink energy drinks combine them with alcohol.

Can you overdo it? Is it dangerous?

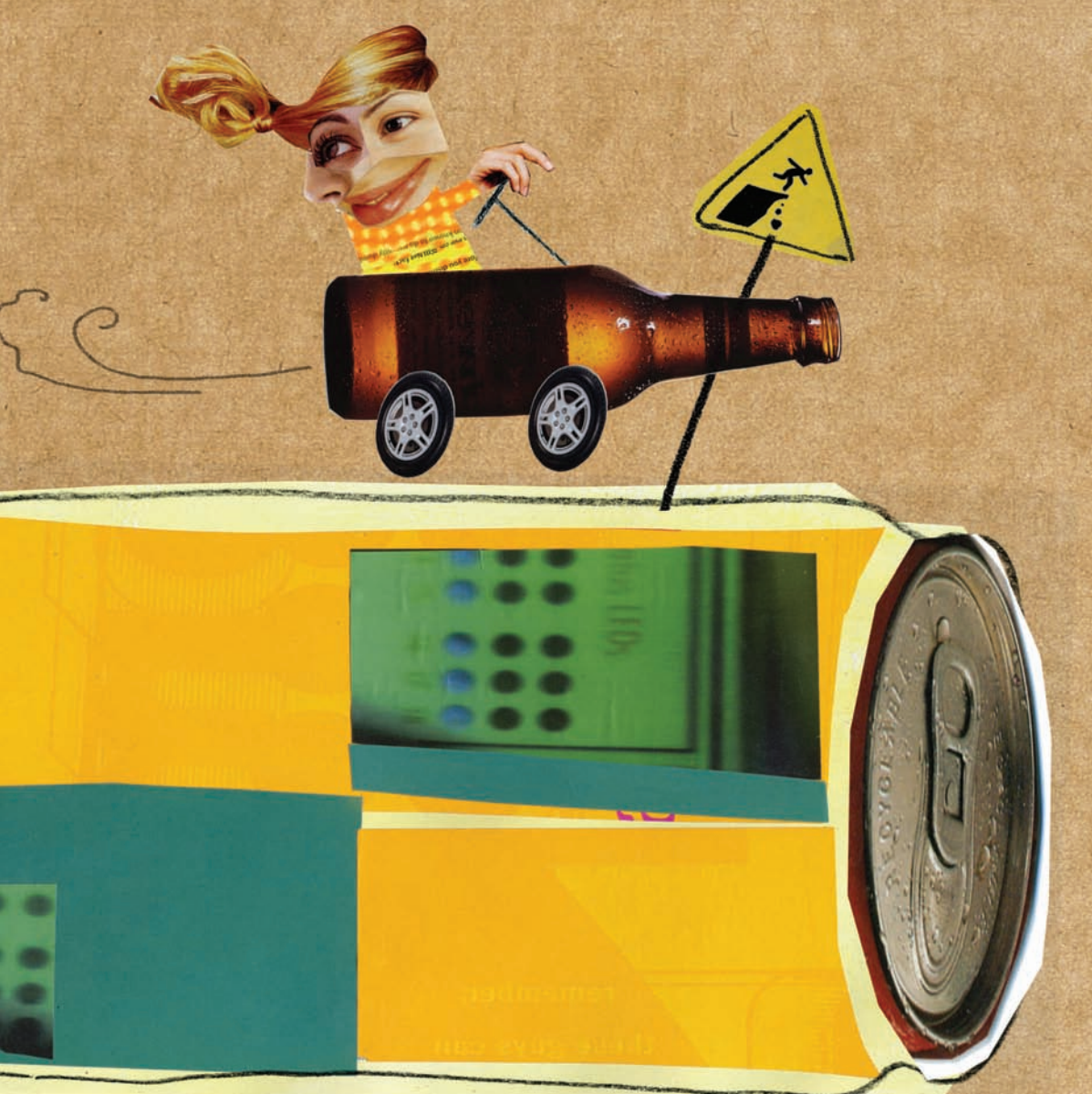
Yes and no.

No, mixing alcohol with an energy drink is not dangerous in itself, provided you drink a reasonable amount.

Yes, because it's easy to drink a lot, which means you end up drinking too much. Obviously, when you drink too much alcohol+energy drink, you're drinking too much alcohol!

And drinking too much alcohol is definitely DANGEROUS.





THE MIX IS TREACHEROUS BECAUSE THE INTOXICATION IS SO INSIDIOUS

The treacherous part of the alcohol-energy drink mix is that people don't feel as drunk as they really are. They are, in fact, unquestionably drunk and their faculties are impaired, but they don't realize it.

▲ Treacherous because it causes false perceptions

Compared to someone drinking alcohol only, a person drinking an alcohol-energy drink mix is less likely to notice:

- headaches
- weakness
- dry mouth
- impaired motor coordination.

▲ Treacherous because the mix gives you bad information

A person drinking energy drinks with alcohol will have the same blood alcohol content as a person drinking the same amount of alcohol by itself. When the two are observed side by side, both people demonstrate the same trouble with motor coordination and visual reaction speed.



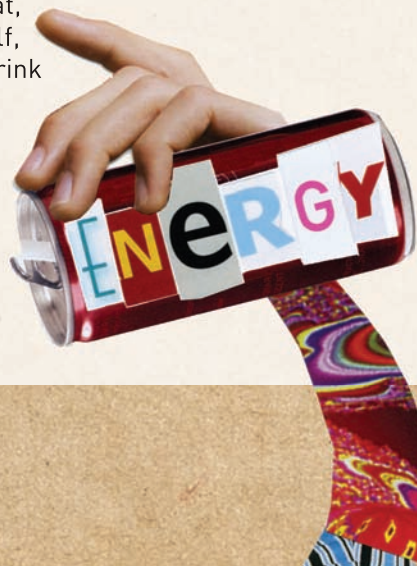
▲ Treacherous because the combination inhibits self-regulation

Because the mix drinkers don't feel the effects of the alcohol, the self-regulating mechanisms associated with being drunk fail to function.

▲ Treacherous because the combination doubles some of the risks

One study of American college students found that, compared to students who drank alcohol by itself, those who drank it in combination with an energy drink were **twice** as likely to:

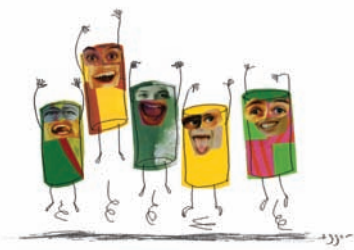
- hurt themselves or be injured;
- require medical attention;
- get into a vehicle with a drunk driver;
- assault someone sexually;
- be sexually abused.



IS IT TRUE THAT THE COMBINATION CAN LEAD TO DRINKING TOO MUCH ALCOHOL?

People who combine alcohol and energy drinks often do so to mask the unpleasant taste of the alcohol. The mix tends to be downed more quickly and people drink more on each occasion than they would if they were drinking straight alcohol. They end up drinking more and more.

Here's what a recent study found:



	People drinking an alcohol-energy drink mix	People drinking alcohol only
Usual number of drinks	5,8	4,5
Maximum number of drinks per occasion	8,3	6,1
Episodes of intoxication per week	1,4	0,73

ANOTHER UNPLEASANT EFFECT: KILLER "MORNING AFTER" SYMPTOMS

One final warning

While energy drinks may mask the symptoms of inebriation and quench your thirst, when you combine them with alcohol you can expect to feel even worse the next day than someone who drank straight alcohol.

Also, the more alcohol you drink, the thirstier you feel. Why is that?

Because caffeine and alcohol are both diuretics, meaning they prevent the kidneys from reabsorbing water and increase its elimination. That causes a chain reaction. The real risk is in continuing to drink alcohol instead of water. That just dehydrates you further and makes you thirstier. It's hard to get off the merry-go-round!

"Morning after" symptoms – headache, general malaise, extreme fatigue – are all related to dehydration. And everything gets worse when it's hot.

When you're at a party or dancing and the temperature is up there, drinking alcohol with energy drinks increases dehydration.

Which gives you a morning after you could really do without.

One solution? Moderation! It's always in good taste!